

Another eventful week for Task Force Eagle. On 12 January, General Houston, Chief of the Australian Defense Force, visited Qasim Airbase. He toured our facilities, traveled to the Australian field hospital at Danni Camp, and interacted with Soldiers. General Houston had many positive remarks concerning our efforts in support of the humanitarian relief mission.

During the past four days, Pakistanis have celebrated the Islamic holiday of Eid ul-Adha. The first day is the primary holiday, on which men, women, and children are expected to dress in their finest clothing and perform prayer in a large congregation. Muslims who can afford to do so sacrifice domestic animals, usually goats in Pakistan, as a symbol of the prophet Ibrahim's sacrifice. The meat is distributed amongst their neighbors, relatives, and the poor and hungry. The charitable instincts of the Muslim community are demonstrated during Eid ul-Adha by the concerted effort to see that no impoverished Muslim is left without sacrificial food during this day. As a tribute to our Pakistani Military hosts, we gave a goat to Brigadier General Tanveer, the Qasim Airbase Commander. He greatly appreciated our generosity and returned the gesture by giving us bushels of fresh oranges and lemons.

Our delivery of humanitarian relief supplies continues in record numbers since we implemented sling loads in December 2005. CW4 Walsh, B Company, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 158<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment, tied his record from last week, delivering 55 tons in one day. We have currently delivered 17.5 million pounds of relief supplies, conducted 3,736 casualty evacuations, and flown more than 4,300 accident-free hours.

Additionally, we have been planning several VIP transport missions, including former President Bush and Senator John Kerry. Four Blackhawks with 20 Soldiers from Task Force Griffin (12<sup>th</sup> Aviation Brigade headquartered in Geibelstadt, Germany) safely arrived from Afghanistan to support the Bush 41 mission.

The 220 Soldiers of B Co, 7-158 have been preparing for their upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Aircrews have conducted combat maneuver training and have attended a variety of required briefings.

We continue camp improvements in order to enhance the quality of life at our Living Support Area. We recently spread approximately 100 cubic yards of gravel to keep the mud down on the access roads and foot paths. Additionally, we have winterized water pipes for our shower trailers in anticipation of colder temperatures. Our dining facility recently passed a health inspection in flying colors and continues serving outstanding meals.

Our Soldiers' morale and health remains high. Many Soldiers have been watching NFL playoffs in anticipation of the Super Bowl in February. Other MWR events include movie nights and a trivia night with prizes. Soldiers have found time to maintain their physical fitness and relieve stress by running, lifting weights, and sports.

The redeployment of 4BDE Soldiers remains one of my priorities. Senior leaders have discussed several courses of action without setting final dates. I will keep you posted as information becomes available.

I am very proud of our outstanding mission accomplishment and appreciate your continued support.

Respectfully,

COL Bob Johnson